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THE NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE OF W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM AS DISPLAYED IN HIS NOVELS

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by
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Maugham's meritoriousness for critical judgment

When the work of an important writer has extended over more than forty years, it is only right that we accord him some definite critical judgment, for he has become a subject for something more than casual and cursory treatment. It is imperative that we consider him as more than the author of various, individual works, some of them pleasing, some displeasing to the general reading public. We must think of him as the creator through his accumulated writing of a certain, definite impression. Certainly that reading public is not in quite the same state of mind as if he had not lived, as if he had not written. He has either enriched or impoverished it, either exalted or lowered its opinion of human nature, either aroused or dimmed its vision for beauty in the external world. But most important of all he has clarified the fleeting domain of what is worth while in a life of multiple choice. He has accentuated by countless, minute strokes his interest in the world of morals. In other words, he has become an influence to be either cherished or disapproved; he has become a tangible part of our mental climate. He belongs

indisputably to our consciousness whether we will it or no.

Frequently in the case of a contemporary writer we disregard this vital connection with the reading public. We are accustomed to take him for granted as we do members of our family. Furthermore, it is rather difficult to estimate at its true value the worth of a voice still speaking in our midst for our amusement or instruction or entertainment.

The problem of technique

Style, workmanship, technique or whatever words we may find to discuss Somerset Maugham's innate ability is not a quality that is neatly nailed on an individual's writing; it is not some sauce spread over it; nor is it some peg to fit in a certain groove. Rather is it the quality of the work itself. We read a novel and we discuss the picture of life that has been given us by the author; we speak of the characters who move in and out of the story; we try to secure the author's perspective; we mention his ability to arouse emotion, his pictorial force, his dramatic vigour and so on, but we forget that the sole reason we have to discuss these items is that the author has expressed them, and has used

a certain style or workmanship or technique to convey to the reader whatever he wishes. Literature is interpretation of life through the medium of language; it is language which is so clear, so moving, so direct that we feel every emotion and sentiment the author wishes to arouse in us. Hence this problem of language or of technique is the primary problem of any literary work. It involves everything which presents the author's view. Every writer takes from the colossal melange of life something which he wishes to communicate to others. That portion of life that he utilizes shows us the man himself; his technique in presenting it displays the artist, and undoubtedly the age in which it is written influences both.

In our age it seems as if the major part of intelligent mankind has become increasingly self-conscious towards its general and human environment. Because of this the chief problem of technique has been how to adapt language to this widened viewpoint. The history of our contemporary novel has been the story of subtler means to display the intricacies of human relationships, of stressing the elements of the unseen and the unexpected in the common run of affairs.

In discussing the technique of Mr. Maugham we are

going to dwell chiefly upon plot, the unity that he has aimed for and achieved, his characters, setting, point of view, emphasis and in briefer review style. Primarily we are going to prove that he is a realist with however romantic tendencies. We are going to state his attitude on many contemporary problems of technique, as, for instance, the benefits of a well-organized plot against the wandering obscurity of much present day writing. We are going to prove that he is above all a master craftsman and deserves an important place among such painstaking artists as Flaubert, Balzac, Hardy and Galsworthy.

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CHAPTER II

MAUGHAM'S ROMANTIC REALISM

Jacobean reason for novel's existence

Henry James[1] states that the only reason for the existence of a novel is that it attempts to represent life. "A novel," he says, "is in its broadest definition a personal, a direct representation of life: that, to begin with, constitutes its value, which is greater or less according to the intensity of impression created."[2]

Pertinent differences between Romanticism and Realism

It is in this respect that realists and romanticists differ. Technically there is no such thing as romantic material, nor on the other hand is there some definite realistic substance. The distinction is more subtle; it is internal says Clayton Hamilton[3] and consists in the method of presenting the subject matter.

[1] W. D. Howells, Mr. Henry James's Later Works, in North American Revue, New York. 203:572-84.

[2] *Loc. cit.*

[3] Clayton Hamilton, *A Manual of the Art of Fiction*, Garden City: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1924, pp. 25-43.

He goes on further and says:

> Scientific discovery, philosophic understanding, and artistic expression of the truths of human life are phases of creation common to romantics and realists alike; but though the writers of both schools meet equally upon the central ground of philosophic understanding, is it not evident that the realists are most interested in looking backward over the antecedent ground of scientific discovery, and the romantics are most interested in looking forward over the subsequent ground of artistic expression?[4]

Hence it can be seen that the realists employ an inductive method. They present a series of imagined incidents that resemble closely actual life. The reader is gently led from these particular incidents to a realization of the general truth that underlies them.

When one applies this test of the inductive method to the writings of W. Somerset Maugham, it is noted that he is a realist. His purpose in writing is to illustrate certain, unvarying truths of human life by a series of imagined incidents. He has translated philosophic truths into gripping, colorful episodes, has endowed them with actuality, and thus given expression to truth. But Mr. Hamilton's tenet is not embracing enough to give conclusive proof that Maugham is a realist. We must seek further evidence.

[4] Ibid. p. 30.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica states that realism is that which is opposed to idealism in various senses. "The realist is (1) he who deliberately declines to select his subjects from the beautiful or harmonious, and, more especially, describes ugly things and brings out details of an unsavoury sort; (2) he who deals with individuals, not types; (3) most properly, he who strives to represent the facts exactly as they are."[5]

Maugham certainly selects his material from the unsavoury elements of life; under our analysis of his characters we will show that he deals definitely with individuals, and thirdly to the utmost of his power he attempts to state the facts as they are or rather as they would be if they were to be enacted in life.

Furthermore, we find that the predominant flavor in Maugham's writings as a whole is that of bitter disillusion. Like Flaubert he portrays satirically the real and also jeers at the ideal which in reality he craves emotionally and imaginatively, an example of the conflict that is being perpetually waged in him between the head and the heart. Hence he is not strictly and altogether a realist. He oscillates between the pole of realism as he

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[5] Encyclopaedia Britannica volume 19 (14th edition), p. 6.

conceives it, and the pole of romance, and so far as any serious philosophy is concerned is left somewhat suspended in vacuo.

Another factor that links him also to the romantic cause is his romantic imagination. He lays story after story in the South Sea Isles where he says there is no law and where man enjoys complete freedom. Mr. Maugham speaks of his interest in these far-off countries in "The Summing Up":

> I went (to the South Seas) looking for beauty and romance and glad to put a great ocean between me and the trouble that harassed me. I found beauty and romance, but I found also something I had never expected. I found a new self. Ever since I left St. Thomas's Hospital I had lived with people who attached value to culture. I had come to think that there was nothing in the world more important than art. I looked for a meaning in the universe and the only one I could find was the beauty that men here and there produced.......Now I entered a new world, and all the instinct in me of a novelist went out with exhilaration to absorb the novelty. It was not only the beauty of the islands that took me, Herman Melville and Pierre Loti had prepared me for that......nor was it their ramshackle, slightly adventurous, easy life; what excited me was to meet one person after another who was new to me............
>
> I stepped off my pedestal. It seemed to me that these men had more vitality than those I had known hitherto. They did not burn with a hard, gemlike flame, but with a hot, smoky, consuming fire. They had their own narrownesses. They had their prejudices. They were often dull and stupid. I did not care. They were different. In civilized communities men's idiosyncrasies are mitigated by the necessity of conforming to certain rules of behaviour. Culture is a mask that hides their faces. Here people showed themselves bare......They were all sorts, but my powers

> of observation without conscious effort enabled me to pigeon-hole each one in my awareness.[6]

Irving Babbitt in speaking of the romantic imagination says of this tendency in man to escape to strange and primitive lands in the fashion of Rousseau or Bernadin St. Pierre:

> A somewhat similar illusion is that of the man who journeys into a far country and enjoys in the highest degree the sense of romantic strangeness. He has escaped from the convention of his own society and is inclined to look on the men and women he meets in the foreign land as Arcadian apparitions.[7]

Despite these romantic tendencies, however, Maugham is predominantly a realist. There is an astringency about his work that is most refreshing. He has always stood by his guns and refused to pander to the public taste for the saccharine. One reason why he is a good author is because he never is squeamish in the face of reality; he is at all times anti-sentimental. He makes Basil in *The Merry-Go-Round*[8] just after he has seduced Jenny remark somewhat to the effect that if everybody were as cool at night as they were in the morning, well.... Life then, replies his friend, would be a Sunday school.

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[6] *The Summing Up*. Garden City, Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc. 1938. pp. 196-8.

[7] Irving Babbitt, *Rousseau and Romanticism*. New York, Houghton Mifflin Comp., 1919, p. 111.

[8] W. Somerset Maugham, *The Merry-Go-Round*. London, Hutchinson and Company, 1901.

Maugham is like his master Flaubert in his contemptuous view of humanity. Most of his women have the souls of harlots; most of his men are frankly sensual making love after they have enjoyed a good meal, almost as a part of the digestive process. His virtuous characters are hard, his worldly characters hypocritical.

Clear-sightedness in Maugham's characters leads them to cruelty. They have no qualms in bringing suffering upon others, for he is a firm believer in the principle of the survival of the fittest. Witness the realism in one of his little-known early works *The Explorer*.[9] He is relentless in hunting Lucy Allerton's lovable but shifty father to prison and death for his weakness. Hence Maugham seems to stand alone among novelists in facing the utter ruthlessness of life. As he refused to make any compromise in his writing, so does he refuse to allow his characters any safe refuge. It is because of this that he has been accused of cynicism and brutality.

Strength, simplicity, beauty, vigour, these are the things that Maugham admires. It is these things which give him a profound liking for Homer, Thucydides, Shakespeare, Dryden, Swift.

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[9] W. Somerset Maugham, *The Explorer* (only copy obtainable dramatized version) London, Heinemann, 1912.

Excesses of realism

Realism has always been subject to attack and in some cases justly so. Oftentimes the realist grows slightly myopic and comes to have an inordinate passion for facts solely as facts forgetting that there should be some truth underlying the mere details. He makes, as has often been pointed out, photographs not pictures; he includes insignificant as well as significant details and clouds the truth; he may become either tedious or pornographically expository. Mr. Maugham has not been caught on either horn of this dilemma; he has escaped the wearisome tediousness of much of George Eliot or Trollope; he has successfully eschewed the sheer sordidness of Zola.

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CHAPTER III

PLOT

When one delves into the technique of a writer, he finds himself confused by many ramifications. Technique is literally the author's distinctive way of handling characters, plot, setting, narrative, emphasis, and so on. But it is not quite as simple an affair as merely analyzing the author's methods in various works, contrasting them, and drawing up a platform of neat, precise hypotheses. No, many other factors enter into consideration. Whom did Maugham follow in his novel form? Does he draw his characters directly from life; are they purely created figures or are they composite portraits? What influenced him to use the Far East as setting for so much of his work? Does he approve of Chekhov's rather desultory form? Does he use one point of view almost exclusively or does he believe in shifting this to suit the needs of the novel? These are only a few of the many questions that must be answered to give a satisfactory view of Mr. Maugham's narrative technique.

Compression in Maugham's novels

The prime quality that attracts even the most casual reader of Somerset Maugham is the swift, un-

unbroken way in which he proceeds from the exposition of his material to the conclusion. This quality is not so noticeable in Of Human Bondage; there would naturally be more digression in this biographical type of novel in which we see the candid revelation of Philip Carey's adventures of the spirit. However, it is very apparent in his later novels, noticeably The Moon and Sixpence, Cakes and Ale, and Theatre. Everything that is not strictly essential to the dramatic unity of the work is harshly cut; Maugham has no patience with eloquent addenda or "purple patches".

Maugham's disfavour with the critics

It is probably this to a large extent that has prejudiced many British critics against Maugham, for strangely enough he does not possess a high ranking among contemporary writers. The English have become accustomed to their great novels being somewhat unproportioned and cumbersome, as well as digressive. They wish a huge galaxy of characters to be portrayed who do not have much bearing one upon the other, but who, nevertheless, wander about and give an air of verisimilitude to the work. Because of Maugham's well-cut compression he has always found favor with the French;

they can appreciate the inevitable and logical conclusion that he usually reaches.

Maugham, a weaver of tales

Primarily Maugham is, as he confesses himself, a weaver of tales. He realizes that men in general take a keen delight in listening to a good story. A great many sophisticated litterati deny this; they are staunch devotees of Chekhov and Katherine Mansfield; they like their stories to come to a straggling end; they prefer dots to the conventional denouement. Yet paradoxically these same fanatics against plot read detective stories, and what is more enjoy them. That fact in itself proves that the story impulse is deep-rooted and universal. Furthermore, the curiosity of the reader to know what finally does happen to the characters to whom he has been introduced is perfectly natural, and only by the development of a plot can this curiosity be satisfied. Besides both arousing and satisfying the curiosity, the plot serves another function; it sustains the reader's interest and puts him into whatever mood the author desires, mirth, sadness, bitterness, nostalgia, horror. Maugham speaks of this dearth of plots among so many of his contemporaries:

> There are a number of clever writers who, with all sorts of good things in their heads to say and a gift for creating living people, do not know what on earth to do with them when they have created them. They cannot invent a plausible story. Like all writers (and in all writers there is a certain amount of humbug) they make a merit of their limitations and either tell the reader that he can imagine for himself what happens or else berate him for wanting to know. They claim that in life stories are not finished, situations are not rounded off and loose ends are left hanging. This is not always true, for at least death finishes all our stories; but even if it were it would not be a good arrangement.[10]

Maugham's multiplicity of ideas

Unlike those writers who have difficulty in knowing what to do with their characters, Somerset Maugham has one distinct advantage. He never lacks a subject. He himself tells us that he has more stories in his head than he will ever have time to write. Those ideas of his, these plots assume concreteness as a result of time spent in intense speculation and pondering; when they become clear and actual in his mind, and only then, does he put them into his works. Yet he says that he has little imagination:

> But though I have had variety of invention, and this is not strange since it is the outcome of the variety of mankind, I have had small power of imagination. I have taken living people and put them into the situations, tragic or comic, that their characters have suggested. I might well say that they

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[10] W. Somerset Maugham, The Summing Up. Garden City, Doubleday, Doran & Company, 1938. p. 220.

> invented their own stories. I have been incapable of those great, sustained flights that carry the authors on broad pinions into a celestial sphere. My fancy, never very strong, has been hampered by my sense of probability.[11]

Aid he has received from wide reading

Despite the fact that he has a mind naturally endowed with a rich story sense, Mr. Maugham does not neglect the inspiration he can receive from wide, varied and intensive reading. Reading, he remarks, is his chief pleasure, more stimulating, more lucrative in rich results than even the most entrancing social concourse. He reads not as a critic, but as a student anxious to glean information from the work at hand. He raises no cloak of intellectuality when he says:

> It is not my business to judge it (the book), but to absorb what I can of it, as the amoeba absorbs a particle of a foreign body, and what I cannot assimilate has nothing to do with me.[12]

His works the result of careful preparation

Nor do his works, well-conceived, well-plotted, well-executed come forth as the result of some unpremeditated miracle. They are the result of careful

[11] Ibid. p. 83.

[12] Ibid. p. 92.

preparation. When an idea has occurred to him, he cherishes it watchfully; it must not be like the seed sown on barren ground which quickly withers away. He must exert all his native genius, his acquired technical skill, his experiential realism in order that his work may be presented with adroit completeness. It is because of the utmost pains that Mr. Maugham takes for even such simple short stories as we see in those brief gems entitled Cosmopolitans[13] that he justly deserves the title of our finest contemporary craftsman.

Maugham's belief that writing is difficult business

It is because Maugham is this expert craftsman, this virtuoso, that he looks somewhat askance at those who think writing is a comparatively easy matter that anyone can do in their spare moments and which requires little practice and slight technical skill:

> It is acknowledged that the technique of painting and musical composition can only be acquired by assiduous labour, and the productions of dilettantes are rightly regarded with good-humoured or exasperated contempt. We all congratulate ourselves that the radio and gramophone have driven from our drawing-rooms the amateur pianist and the amateur

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[13] W. Somerset Maugham, Cosmopolitans, Garden City, Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., 1936.

> singer. The technique of writing is no less difficult than that of the other arts and yet, because he can read and write a letter, there is a notion that anyone can write well enough to write a book. Writing seems now the favorite relaxation of the human race......There is an impression abroad that everyone has it in him to write one book; but if this implies a good book the impression is false. It is true that the amateur may sometime produce a work of merit. By a lucky chance he may have a natural facility for writing well, he may have had experiences that are in themselves interesting, or he may have a charming or quaint personality that his very inexpertness helps him to get down on the printed page. But let him remember that the saying asserts only that everyone has it in him to write one book; it says nothing about a second. The amateur is wise not to try his luck again. His next book is sure to be worthless.[14]

A writer must be judged by his whole body of works

Mr. Maugham has a creditable list of dramas, novels and short stories behind him. He is no writer of one renowned work; he has achieved distinction in three individual fields. He has been writing roughly speaking almost a half-century. Thus he has added materially to the literature of Great Britain. For it is by a great body of works, several "chefs d'oeuvre" that an author may be judged. His first novels may be weak, experimental, somewhat improbable, but he can learn only by the trial and error method. In this way

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[14] Maugham, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-79.

he discovers his defects, his virtues; then fully aware of his potentialities, he may produce his finest works. The less successful works of his period of acclimatization may be forgotten, nay indeed will be forgotten. So too will many of his works of his happier periods. But out of that output there will be some that will have that essential, universal element that will make for posthumous fame, fleeting though this may be.

One is astounded at the variety of plots found in Maugham's novels; where in the world did they all originate; why do we not see more repetition; why do not some of them become tedious and somewhat dull? (In the litany of Maugham's literary faults, one will never find dullness.) Even in his openly confessed potboilers such as The Explorer or The Magician there is lively and sustained interest. Certainly it is not directly from life that he has derived his plots. The ordinary run of events, even the extraordinary that are emblazoned in the tabloids, seldom provide the writer with a ready-to-wear plot. They will, perhaps, give a small suggestion and from that the author catches his clue. For it is dangerous to take stories directly from life; they are far too improbable.

In regard to the variety of plots it might be interesting to mention several of them, as they are shown in the working out of his best known novels:

Liza of Lambeth

Liza of Lambeth is an imposing first novel, and although now in no way offensive to delicate sensibilities, in that close of the Victorian era caused quite a furor. A typical review of it might be seen in the Athenaeum saying some such mincing words as readers who prefer not to be brought into contact with some of the ugliest words and phrases in the language should be warned that Mr. Maugham's book is not for them for Liza of Lambeth is emphatically unpleasing as literature. But curiously enough the most offensive of these ugly words and phrases was "belly" which in the second edition was changed to "stomach". It was one of the first novels that treated of the London slums in a naturalistic fashion, objectively, without any trace of sentimental mawkishness. It is a simple, straightforward account of the last year of a young, impetuous factory girl, her happy but scandalous affair with an older married man, the father of five children, and her tragic almost inevitable end as the result of a miscarriage. The slums are the background of this cockney idyl, but Maugham is no social

propagandist. The few characters that do appear are presented as they are with no trappings, with pitiless candor. None are completely bad; none completely virtuous; they have a distorted bourgeois code that they ineptly and inadequately apply. In this novel we can trace the beginnings of Mr. Maugham's ironical, almost macabre humour. At the end we see old Mrs. Kemp, Liza's mother, drunk, maudlin, planning an elegant funeral for Liza whom she has allowed to die through sheer neglect. This first novel is more than a slice of life; it is life in a concentrated tablet. It is a record of Maugham's experiences in these selfsame slums in the nineties when he was a young interne at St. Thomas's Hospital. Like Hogarth's brutal portraitures of the 18th century, Maugham made a rough charcoal drawing of the London slums before they yielded to some dictums of hygiene and sanitation.

The Making of a Saint

The title of his second novel, The Making of a Saint is another ironical excursion. Maugham relates the love affairs and political intrigues of an Italian adventurer in the fifteenth century who seeks solace from the disillusions of life in a Franciscan

monastery. Moreover, there were experiences quite in the vein of Rabelais or Boccaccio that went to the making of anything but a saint out of Filippo Brandolini.

The Hero

Maugham's third novel was The Hero which upon reading resembles somewhat his widely popular The Moon and Sixpence. But it attracted little attention at its publication in 1901. It is a protest against the Kipling kind of heroics so sweeping and wide-spread at the turn of the century and the termination of the Boer war. It is also somewhat grim and dull. Perhaps, it was his admiration for Flaubert that prompted him to write such long descriptions of scenery. It tells the story of James Parsons who had been reared on the staunch, narrow principles of Puritanism and the necessity of doing one's duty. In the Boer war he begins to doubt this, and riddled with scepticism returns to his native village in Kent. Finally he commits suicide to escape marrying his self-righteous sweetheart. Maugham does not write as in Liza of Lambeth with complete objectivity; he makes numerous digressions in the style of Fielding and Thackeray. But one can trace the

beginnings of his cynical portraits of village life in the persons of the parson and his wife.

Mrs. Craddock

In Mrs. Craddock Maugham again writes of Kent, that great farming country where he was born. To the audience of 1902 it must have been bold and somewhat startling in its forthright description of feminine psychology. It is a stringent and pitiless analysis of a woman in love, who woos a yeoman farmer, marries him, tires of him and is finally released by his death in the hunting field. Neither heroine nor hero is characterized in an outstanding way, and the theme is a little too reminiscent of D. H. Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover.

In this novel we find for the first time the incomparable Miss Ley. She is a rock of plain, homely common sense. Like an Elizabethean prologue, she expresses Maugham's ideals. Her motto is the serviceable cliche "live and let live". Like a water-fall in the desert, she stands out among her Victorian conferes. We see her again in The Merry-Go-Round, and she must, I certainly think, be the prototype for Lady Sophia in The Bishop's Apron.

The Merry-Go-Round

In 1904 appeared The Merry-Go-Round, a very unusual novel but a failure. Maugham says of it:

> I tried various experiments. One of them had a certain novelty. The experience of life I was forever seeking suggested to me that the novelist's method of taking two or three people or even a group, and describing their adventures, spiritual and otherwise, as though no one else existed and nothing else was happening in the world, gave a very partial picture of reality. I was myself living in several sets that had no connection with one another, and it occurred to me that it might give a truer picture of life if one could carry on at the same time the various stories of equal importance that were enacted during a certain period in different circles. I took a larger number of persons than I had ever sought to cope with before and devised four or five independent stories. They were attached to one another by a very thin thread, an elderly woman who knew at least one person in each group. The book was called The Merry-Go-Round. It was rather absurd because owing to the influence of the nineties I made everyone incredibly beautiful, and it was written in a tight and affected manner. But its chief defect was that it lacked the continuous line that directs the reader's interest; the stories after all were not of equal importance, and it was rather tiresome to divert one's attention from one set to another.[15]

In this book we find much of the philosophy that later appears in Of Human Bondage and many witty epigrams used in later plays. This is a trait that we notice to a large extent in Maugham; he is never loath to use again and again characters, certain situations,

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[15] Ibid., p. 169.

sparkling aphorisms.

The Bishop's Apron

The Bishop's Apron was one of Maugham's most successful novels and with the exception of Cakes and Ale his only humorous work. It is in some ways comparable to Walpole's The Cathedral but on a much more frivolous and cynical note. The main character as one might detect from the title is a bishop who is too engrossed in the good things of this world, and who has an inordinate sense of his own importance. His sister, Lady Sophia, realizes that he is a comic character despite his exalted opinion of himself and her thinly disguised and satiric comments about him are amusing.

The Explorer

The Explorer as mentioned before was frankly a commercial work and deserves obscurity. This book was suggested by the popular character of Stanley in Africa and by numerous Kipling heroes.

The Magician

The Magician tells of a weird scientist who creates human life in the laboratory. Any sense of uncanny eerieness never quite comes off, because Mr. Maugham has no faith in the occult himself. It is

humbug both to him and to the reader.

In 1912 Maugham began writing Of Human Bondage. In two years it was completed. He has said of this:

> I was disconcerted at the unwieldy length to which it seemed to be extending, but I was not writing to please; I was writing to free myself of an intolerable obsession. I achieved the result I aimed at, for, after I had corrected the proofs, I found all those ghosts were laid, and neither the people who played their parts in the story, nor the incidents in which they were concerned every crossed my mind again.[16]

Of Human Bondage (the title being derived from one of the books in Spinoza's "Ethics") is not an autobiography, but an autobiographical novel. In it Maugham confesses that he has mingled fact and fiction. Undoubtedly Philip Carey's emotions were those of the author; it is more likely that the incidents are a melange of the author's own and those of his friends and acquaintances. Without doubt Philip's progress from "human bondage" to a triumphant and freeing nihilism is Somerset Maugham's own, for the author's philosophy as we see in the final chapters of The Summing Up is almost identically that of Philip Carey.

The early chapters of Of Human Bondage seem to

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[16] Richard A. Cordell, W. Somerset Maugham. New York, Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1937, p. 89.

be drawn quite faithfully from Maugham's own life. Philip too suffers the death of both parents at an early age, and at school because of his timidity and shyness he was tormented by his schoolmates. Then too he is reared by an uncle, a clergyman, and is given a club foot which corresponds to Maugham's early impediment of speech, stammering. We see Philip turning to religion, but after the pathetic incident of the unanswered prayer he loses faith in a merciful God, but still has a dread of eternal punishment. Next Philip goes to Heidelberg where he indulges in much freedom of thought. It was here that he met the spiritless Hayward, who gave him a sense of taste, and Weeks who gave the death blow to his childhood faith. He began to yearn for experience, especially with the gentler sex, so when he returned to England he drifted into an affair with the elderly Miss Wilkinson.

There are few things more grotesque than the picture of Philip fortifying himself to take what this unattractive woman had to offer. "She had taken off her skirt and blouse, and was standing in her petticoat. It was short and only came down to the top of her boots; the upper part of it was black, of some shiny material, and there was a red flounce. She wore a camisole of

white calico with short arms. She looked grotesque. Philip's heart sank as he stared at her; she had never seemed so unattractive; but it was too late now. He closed the door behind him and locked it." [17]

Philip was fortunate even to escape to that dismal London office of Herbert Carter and Co., and his lodgings in Barnes: for ten deadly months he learned how not to succeed as an accountant, then finally went to study painting in Paris. In Paris he met the slovenly Fanny Price who hanged herself when she found that she would never become a painter. The picture which Maugham draws of these artists with their endless discussions is excellent. Cronshaw, the poet, particularly stands out, Cronshaw who yearns for the love of chamber maids and the conversation of bishops, preaching his gospel of "carpe diem", finding the meaning of life that Philip many years afterwards discovers himself;

> For the same uprush of fancy which had shown him with all the force of mathematical demonstration that life had no meaning, brought with it another idea; and that was why Cronshaw, he imagined, had given him the Persian rug. As the weaver elaborated his pattern for no end but the pleasure of his aesthetic sense, so might a man live his life, or

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[17] W. Somerset Maugham, Of Human Bondage, New York, Modern Library Press, 1915, p. 180.

> if one was forced to believe that his actions were outside his choosing, so might a man look at his life, that it made a pattern. There was little need to do this as there was use. It was merely something he did for his own pleasure. Out of the manifold events of his life, his deeds, his feelings, his thoughts, he might make a design, regular, elaborate, complicated or beautiful; and though it might be no more than an illusion that he had the power of selection, though it might be no more than a fantastic legerdemain in which appearances were interwoven with moonbeams, that did not matter: it seemed, and so to him, it was. In the vast warp of life, (a river arising from no spring and flowing endlessly to no sea,) with the background to his fancies that there was no meaning and that nothing was important, a man might get a personal satisfaction in selecting the various strands that worked out the pattern. There was one pattern, the most obvious, perfect and beautiful, in which a man was born, grew to manhood, married, produced children, toiled for his bread and died; but there were others, intricate and wonderful, in which happiness did not enter and in which success was not attempted; and in them might be discovered a more troubling grace.[18]

But Philip is a failure as an artist and so he goes back to Blackstable and makes a third fresh start, this time to study medicine. But almost immediately he becomes entangled with Mildred, a common, mincing girl who has no regard, whatsoever, for him. During these medical student days he meets Norah Nesbit, a good-humored, kindly woman, and despite the fact that he did not love her, he made her his mistress, and had some degree of satisfaction until Mildred now deserted by one

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[18] *Ibid*.p. 658.

of her friends returns. This meant breaking off with Norah and caring for Mildred until her child should be born. Then still as passionately in love with her as ever he gives her up to his friend, Griffiths, who in the course of time also abandons her. He had the good fortune to meet Thorpe Athelny and his family who give him many good meals and a zest for El Greco and the beauties of Spain.

He again encounters Mildred who is now a prostitute and makes a home for her in spite of the fact that his love for her is almost dead. They quarrel; she destroys his furniture and leaves him. He loses his little money gambling on the stock market and in desperation becomes a floorwalker. At long last he receives his uncle's estate, takes up his medicine again, and marries the happy, healthy Sally Athelny, whom Maugham believes to be the ideal mate for such an introverted character as Philip.

Of Human Bondage is not a new type of work, rather does it belong to that genre that is as old as the history of the novel itself. It belongs and truly so in that group which includes Tristram Shandy, Tom Jones, David Copperfield, Henry Esmond and The Way of All Flesh. We do not find in this novel the plot and intrigue that

so often characterize his later works. The narrative is simple and is devoted almost entirely to the presentation of the character of Philip Carey, so that at the close of the book we know him far better than we do many of our close friends. Nor do we find in this the wilful obscurity that is present say in James Joyce or Virginia Wolf, nor the sprightly verbal vaudeville of Meredith. The prime quality of Of Human Bondage is its almost painful sincerity and frank candor.

The fact that Of Human Bondage appeared in the turbulent war years did not make for any immediate or startling success. In fact a review of it that appeared in the "Athenaeum" seemed to have spoken for many readers:

> Today when so many are teaching us tersely how to live and die, it requires some little patience to wade through five hundred pages describing the process as leisurely and none too adequately carried out by a member of the male sex in the Victorian era.[19]

In America it was more favorably received due, perhaps, to the staunch championship of Theodore Dreiser who hailed it as one of the greatest works in English fiction. Dreiser says in his review of it in the "Nation" in his characteristic heavy style:

Sometimes in retrospect of a great book the mind

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[19] Cordell, op. cit., p. 90.

> falters, confused by the multitude and yet the harmony of detail, the strangeness of the frettings, the brooding, musing intelligence that has foreseen, loved, created, elaborated, perfected, until, in this middle ground which we call life, somewhere between nothing and nothing, a dream, a happy memory, a song, a benediction. In viewing it one finds nothing to criticize or to regret. The thing sings, has color. It has rapture. You wonder at the loving patience which has evolved it, a novel or an autobiography or social transcript of the utmost importance.[20]

Of Human Bondage is a long book: eight hundred closely packed pages and every one of them essential. Maugham like his hero changes in viewpoint from every experience he undergoes. To fail constantly, and yet to have the courage to get up, to be interested in every man he meets--these are the qualities that made Philip an interesting man and Maugham an important artist. Of Human Bondage is a model of what the autobiographical novel should be. S.P.B. Mais says of it, "By comparison with, shall we say, Hugh Walpole's Fortitude, Of Human Bondage stands out as immeasurably superior to most of even the best work in this kind of our time. It is a human document of incalculable value to all men who wish to leave the world richer for their experiences." [21]

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[20] Ibid. pp. 91-2.

[21] S.P.B. Mais, Some Modern Authors, London, Grant Richards Ltd., p. 123.

The Moon and Sixpence

Although The Moon and Sixpence does not contain those elements that go to make up popular fiction, nevertheless, this novel was the most widely discussed of the year and won for Maugham a staunch audience. It was suggested by the life of Paul Gauguin, the great French impressionistic painter. However, it is not a biography of Gauguin, for Charles Strickland, his hero, has characteristics of Rimbaud, Van Gogh, and, perhaps, Cezanne, and certainly his artistic creed is that of El Greco, the Spanish painter who had such a profound spiritual and aesthetic effect upon the author himself. Charles Strickland is first shown as a prosperous stockbroker who suddenly without warning gives up his business, abandons his family, goes to Paris and gives himself entirely to painting. This is a little like the hegira that Maugham himself took back in 1904. At that time he had become a somewhat successful playwright and had one or two novels to his credit, hence the London hostesses had been eager to lionize him. However, he soon wearied of the rather insipid life of the London man of letters and went to Paris, there to live in Montparnasse in close contact with the French surrealistic paintings of Cezanne, Van Gogh and Gauguin.

Even then he was stirred by the accounts of Gauguin's exotic adventures in the South Seas. But he never utilized this interest until ten years later when he returned from a trip to Tahiti.

Despite the fact that The Moon and Sixpence is somewhat fragmentary in construction, it is artistically satisfying. The only figure of importance is Charles Strickland and we are engrossed entirely in the presentation of his character. Even during the dull, prosaic years as a London man of business, he has been possessed by longings for self-expression through the medium of art. Finally he breaks all the ties that have bound him to his family. He becomes nothing now but a slave to his art. He is cruel, brutal, without human tenderness, nor does he even try to defend himself. What the world considers his duty, what the world considers to be right and honorable, mean nothing to him; he must only paint. He wants the moon and gladly renounces all his claims to sixpence. At the end he has sacrificed even his life. He dies lonely, blind, but still successful according to his own lights. He is the personification of Browning's "success in failure". Before his death he paints the walls of his little shack with bizarre, esoteric paintings which

symbolize the life of his soul. Dr. Coutras, the narrator, says:

> It was a vision of the beginnings of the world, the garden of Eden. It was a hymn to the beauty of the human form, male and female, and the praise of nature, sublime, indifferent, lovely and cruel. It gave you an awful sense of the infinity of space and of the endlessness of time. You saw man in the nakedness of his primeval instincts, and you were afraid for you saw yourself.[22]

Strickland cares nothing even for posthumous fame. He has his native wife promise to have his house destroyed so that his paintings will end with his death. The author imagines Strickland's tragic, yet to him satisfying last days:

> Working silently knowing that it was his last chance, I fancied that here he must have said all that he knew of life and all that he divined. And I fancied that perhaps here he had at last found peace. The demon which possessed him was exorcised at last, and with the completion of the work, for which all his life had been a painful preparation, rest descended on his remote and tortured soul. He was willing to die for he had fulfilled his purpose. I think Strickland knew it was a masterpiece. He had achieved what he wanted. His life was complete. He had made a world and saw that it was good. Then in pride and contempt he destroyed it.[23]

The technique of The Moon and Sixpence is noteworthy and singular. It is written entirely in the first person, nor does the author make any attempt to

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[22] W. Somerset Maugham, The Moon and Sixpence. New York, Doran, 1919, p. 287

[23] Ibid. p. 293.

explain Strickland's behaviour. From a few scattered observations and joint experiences the story is built up. The author does not become omniscient and so merely presents Strickland as cruel, callous, brutal, repellent, but somehow exerting a curious fascination upon the reader. When we finish the book, the old lesson that we can never really know another human being is fully brought home. Even Proust with all his delvings into the subconscious mind can not give us a picture of a complete human personality.

Feminine audience intrigued by The Moon and Sixpence

Also singular is the fact that The Moon and Sixpence has such a wide feminine audience, for there is no love interest, no winning female characters. Charles Strickland remarks that his wife is an excellent woman and that he wishes she were in hell. Nor can the female audience be flattered by Strickland's observations of women that their besetting sin is their passion to discuss their most private affairs with anyone who is willing to listen, or that they have the ability to do nothing except love and so they have assigned it a ridiculous importance.

Probably the most important reason why this novel

is so popular is the very simple fact that it is interesting. Against our will we are fascinated by the monster, Strickland. He lived by a different set of standards from that by which most of us life, yet he lived strictly according to that. As Thoreau said he kept step to a different drummer from the one most of us hear.

The Painted Veil

In 1925 appeared The Painted Veil, as a subsequent aftermath of extensive traveling through the Far East and especially in China. However, the germs for this book were conceived many years before, during Maugham's student days at St. Thomas's Hospital. Once upon reading Dante he was much struck by a certain passage that dealt with a lady in Siena being murdered by her husband who allowed her to breathe some poisonous vapors at his castle in Maremma of which she was unaware:

> Siena mi fe; disfecemi Maremma:
> Sulsi Colui, she, innanellata pria
> Disposando m'aveva con la sua gemma.
>
> Siena made me, Maremma unmade me; this he knows
> after betrothal espoused me with his ring.[24]

But it was not until many years after, inspired by his travels in China, that Maugham concocted the

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[24] Cordell, op. cit., p. 118.

modern embellishments that would give authenticity to his long thought of idea. The enrolling of the plot is the best feature of the novel. It is swift-moving; Kitty Fane's husband discovers her infidelity; Kitty rushes to her lover who callously abandons her; her husband finally secures his revenge and then dies in the dreadful torments of the plague. But the characters of The Painted Veil are bloodless people whose adventures the author, always a clever story-teller, makes interesting but not moving. It is a matter almost of indifference to us whether Kitty commits adultery, whether her husband shoots her, whether they all die of the plague or not.

Never has Maugham been so in need of his story-telling gifts as in The Painted Veil, and for the first three-fourths of the novel they do not let him down. The opening scene is exciting and there is no diminution of tempo in the following scenes. But the rest of the story, after the situation from "Purgatorio" has been used, is weak. The author's tenet that a story must have a beginning, a middle, and an end is certainly violated here. The Painted Veil comes to a straggling close as it could have done fifty pages sooner, and the dialogue in the last chapters is extremely theatrical.

Cakes and Ale

1930 sees Maugham's greatest humorous work, Cakes and Ale, a chef d'oeuvre of satiric comedy, and certainly one of the most humorous and ironic novels of our time. When we characterize this novel as humorous, it is in the sense of high comedy, for there is little witty repartee, buffoonery or comic exaggeration. Of course the surface resemblance in this work of Edward Driffield to the late Thomas Hardy gave it an immediate and scandalous success, and although Maugham has repeatedly denied that there is any similarity between the two, or that he had Hardy in mind when he conceived this work, the likeness still is astounding. It is certainly true that superficially both have much in common. Both were of the common people; both married twice; both were keen about architecture; both used themes for their novels that had a great deal in common; both enjoyed a serene, dignified old age that enhanced their literary reputation in semi-seclusion in the country tenderly cared for by a much younger wife. However, there is a vast difference in the two that in fairness to Mr. Maugham should be pointed out. Hardy had no publicity agent comparable to the efficient and executive loving Mrs. Barton; Hardy was a poet as well as a novelist, and, most

important of all differences, the first Mrs. Hardy was a cultivated lady of impeccable morals.

The critics naturally fell upon this resemblance with a sadistic delight. Maugham's work was characterized as "trampling on Thomas Hardy's grave", "hitting below the shroud", "grave profaned by literary ghoul". However, the furor was short-lived for even Hardyites could not take a great deal of offense since the picture of Edward Driffield is really a charming and wholly delightful one.

The character of Alroy Kear in this work also afforded a great deal of literary speculation. Kear is exemplary of astounding, commercial success without real talent. It is reported that Hugh Walpole, idol of the American lecture tours and friend of the librarian was furious. But Mr. Maugham only says concerning this:

> I took the appearance from one writer, the obsession with good society from another, the heartiness from a third, the pride in athletic prowess from a fourth, and a great deal from myself. For I have a grim capacity of seeing my own absurdity and I find much in myself to excite my ridicule.[25]

The Narrow Corner

The Narrow Corner is one of Maugham's most inter-

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[25] Ibid. p. 128.

esting novels for in it he has given us a happy blending of humor, philosophy, character analysis, satire and mystery. The central character, Dr. Saunders, an older edition of Philip Carey, has learned to accept without any surprise, disgust or regret any of the odd vagaries of human conduct. He is an opponent of both idealism and asceticism:

> Life is short, nature is hostile, and man is ridiculous; but oddly enough most misfortunes have their compensations, and with a certain humor and a good deal of horse-sense one can make a fairly good job of what is after all a matter of very small consequence.[26]

He has acquired some degree of happiness out of life by an unfailing sense of the ridiculous. Dr. Saunders serves as the voice of the chorus to unroll the plot which concerns the triangle between Fred Blake, Louise Frith and Erik Christessen. When Erik discovers that his fiancee, Louise, has been unfaithful to him with Fred, he commits suicide, but Louise feels little grief.

Theatre

It is readily seen that Somerset Maugham's last novel Theatre, written in 1937, has been created solely for the author's entertainment and for the pleasure of

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[26] Ibid. p. 136. (Quoted from Somerset Maugham, The Narrow Corner, New York, Doubleday, Doran, 1930.)

many of his devotees, and is in no way a worthy successor to Of Human Bondage, The Moon and Sixpence or Cakes and Ale. It is a work, we are sad to say, of a craftsman, a very experienced craftsman it is true, but not of an inspired artist. Perhaps, Maugham has purposely made his setting shallowly brittle and sophisticated, for that is the true world of the theatre, a world which Maugham knew intimately for as a famous dramatist he had supplied the theatre both in London and in New York with plays for many years. But it is a world that contains no glamour for him; nor in this novel does he try to cover it with any intriguing grease-paint.

Julia Lambert is a great actress, not only on the stage but in every phase of her private life as well. Her speech is a conglomeration of lines of past plays; her friends, her husband, her lover are merely her audience in slightly closer view. People thought that she only acted during the two or three hours she was on the stage; they did not know that the character she was playing dwelt in the back of her mind all day long. It often seemed to her that she was two persons, the actress, the popular favorite, the best-dressed woman in London, and that was a shadow; and the woman

she was playing at night, and that was the substance. At the end she triumphs over her younger rival and wins back her lover, but one feels that Maugham has mocked poetic justice too blatantly. We certainly can not rejoice because this shallow, very trivial character has showed her supremacy.

Maugham's narration a simplification of life

In regard to the strict narrative technique that Maugham employs it is necessary to say that his narration is the simplification, or the boiling down of life. He has followed the words of Robert Louis Stevenson:

> And as the root of the whole matter, let him bear in mind that his novel is not a transcript of life, to be judged by its exactitudes; but a simplification of some side or point of life, to stand or fall by its significant simplicity. For although, in great men, working upon great motives, what we observe and admire is often their complexity, yet underneath appearance the truth remains unchanged; that simplification was their method, and that simplicity is their excellence.[27]

At all times Maugham is extremely selective in that his episodes always bear an essential logical relation to each other. He has striven for unity and has accomplished this by rigorously excluding all material

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[27] Clayton Hamilton, A Manual of the Art of Fiction. Garden City, Doubleday, Page & Co., 1924, p. 60.

which does not aid in the unfolding of the plot.

It would be rather interesting to make a Maugham cocktail plot and show exactly what are his ingredients. We would say first of all that he makes liberal use of suspense, keeps the reader engrossed in what is going to happen to his characters from chapter to chapter. There is, moreover, a definite atmosphere to all his novels, whether it be sophisticated or primitive, so let us add a jigger of atmosphere. Further mix several dashes of irony, cynical humor and barbed shafts. These are the spices that intrigue the reader. His characters are usually seething with violent passions, so shake a large dose of these into our compound. Have our plot recipe handled by an experienced story-teller and you will be sure to secure excellent results.

Maugham says that he has an extremely analytic mind and it is because of this that he employs that type of construction which reasons from effect to cause:

> I have a clear and logical brain, but not a very subtle nor a very powerful one. For long I wished it were better. I used to get exasperated because it would not do for me nearly as much as I wished..... It took me a long time to resign myself to making the best of what I had.[28]

In this he resembles his great French model, DeMaupassant,

[28] Maugham, The Summing Up. Op. cit., p. 38.

and veers sharply away from the synthetic presentation of, let us say, Thackeray or Meredith. On the whole Maugham's method seems to be the more practical because he thus excludes superfluous material. Moreover, analysis in the long run is a clearer and simpler method of presentation.

It has become rather up-to-date and clever to break any classical remonstrance that may in any way impede the modern writer. Hence we see many novelists who certainly do not follow Aristotle's injunction that a story must have a beginning, a middle and an end, or the complication, major knot and explication. In all of Maugham's major works these three are definitely present. Of Human Bondage being more or less discursive does not have the clear-cut divisions that his other works have.

Arising from complications of plot we find novels classified either as discursive or compacted, the discursive meaning that there is a large array of characters which tends to give a more extensive view of the sector of life represented, while the compacted present merely three or four characters and hence goes to make up a very intensive view of the horizon of the novel. Of Human Bondage is definitely a discursive novel; we get a clear picture of at least sixty characters. The Moon

and Sixpence with its intense concentration on Strickland follows the Continental compacted model. The rest of his works do not fall sharply into either category; he does not repeat himself by giving us another extensive gallery of characters, but, nevertheless, he introduces quite a few characters in most of his books. One could almost draw up the general conclusion that he uses a semi-discursive, semi-compacted form.

In actual life we find that there are no absolute ends, nor on the other hand any definite and specific beginnings. Hence any narrative no matter how ably done must begin and end somewhere in mid-air, the pressing question being merely how large a portion of the imagined series of events can adequately be presented. In *Of Human Bondage* Maugham follows the tradition of Dickens and Fielding and gives us the story of Philip Carey from birth to maturity. But in his other novels without exception we find that he has abandoned this method, and has chosen to leave a great deal in the lives of his characters unwritten. In his later works *Theatre*, *The Narrow Corner*, *The Painted Veil*, we find that he has adopted the old epic method and has plunged his characters "in medias res". In *Cakes and Ale* and *The Moon and Sixpence* he gradually

covers the past by a series of flash-back episodes. We feel that as he becomes the more expert craftsman, he also becomes more selective of material. Thus, although he rarely follows a chronological pattern, his sequence is always logical, and not only logical, but clarified. (How very different from the methods employed by Aldous Huxley.)

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CHAPTER IV

CHARACTERS

No matter how well an author may handle a plot, it is merely a wooden and creaking device without lifelike, natural and interesting characters to move the framework about. The novelist must strive always to create characters who are vital human beings about whom the reader as the story develops must be anxious to secure further details. Nor does Somerset Maugham fall down in this respect after so adequately fulfilling our expectations in regard to the skillful weaving of plot. In The Summing Up we find countless references to Maugham's choice of characters for his novels, his interest in people as raw material for character presentation, and the conclusions he has drawn after studying people carefully for some forty odd years with the idea of putting them into his novels and short stories:

> I have been attached, deeply attached, to a few people; but I have been interested in men in general not for their own sakes, but for the sake of my work. I have not as Kant enjoined, regarded each man as an end in himself, but as material that might be useful to me as a writer. I have been more concerned with the obscure than with the famous. They are more often themselves. They have had no need to create a figure to protect themselves from the world or to impress it. Their idiosyncrasies have had more chance to develop in the limited circle of their activity, and since they

> have never been in the public eye it has never occurred to them that they have anything to conceal. They display their oddities because it has never struck them that they are odd.[29]

Much of The Summing Up used in previous novels

It is interesting to note that the sentiments Maugham expresses in The Summing Up are not new to his consistent readers; they are like a twice-told tale, and then it suddenly occurs to us that he has voiced all these thoughts before, not through the "I" of the autobiography, but through the medium of some character here or there in his various novels. Usage has evidently entrenched this habit deep within him. Like many authors he finds himself more often able to think for his characters than for himself. And that is true more or less of the professional man of letters; it is a pleasure to decide what to have his characters express, more of a duty to decide what he shall think for himself.

From a careful reading of Maugham, from a detailed study into the feelings, motives, actions of his characters, one can draw at least one hypothesis which can safely stand without fear of contradiction: he does not take people at

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[29] W. Somerset Maugham, The Summing Up. Garden City, Doubleday, Doran Inc., 1938, pp. 5-6.

their face value. He delves deep into that inner life which often lies hidden far beneath the many layers with which society, convention, good-breeding, or merely reticence have encrusted the individual. Perhaps, this use almost of the X ray in seeing what "lies under" was prompted by Maugham's early years in St. Thomas's Hospital in London. During his years of interneship in the slums of Lambeth he must certainly have seen almost every kind of emotion that burns in the human breast, and these emotions, not only in their consequences, but as they actually existed, raw and life-like. These contacts with man as he actually was with little of the veneer that refinement had imposed upon him must indeed have aroused the novelist's instinct in Maugham. Liza of Lambeth is an almost photographic record of his experience in these slums. Liza's tragic fate was certainly such as would have brought her into contact with doctors. He sees that these Lambeth cockneys suffer not so much because of their squalid poverty, but because with none of the advantages that compensate for "middle class morality" they are, nevertheless, subject to its strict and rigorous code.

Philip Carey while attending his interning obstretric duties says:

I learned how little there was in common between

> the poor and the classes above them. They did not envy their betters, for the life was too different, and they had an ideal of ease which made the existence of the middle class seem formal and stiff; moreover, they had a certain contempt for them because they were soft and did not work with their hands. The proud merely wished to be left alone, but the majority looked upon the well-to-do as people to be exploited. They bore the curate with contemptuous indifference, but the district visitor excited their bitter hatred.[30]

Philip, however, being the doctor was received with something almost akin to reverence and veneration, for they could realize the importance of his services to them.

Various Medical men in Maugham's novels

Strangely enough Maugham has not made many of his chief characters medical men, at least officiating medical men, nor has he employed the hospital as a scene for his novels as his contemporary, J. B. Priestly does almost exclusively. However, he has given us a picture of a few doctors that stand out memorably as distinct characters and fall in no way into the more or less standardized "medico" type.

In On A Chinese Screen Maugham gives a rather severe indictment of physicians:

> He had better manners than are usually found in the medical profession which, although blest with many

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[30] W. Somerset Maugham, Of Human Bondage. New York, Modern Library Press, 1915, p. 705.

> virtues, neglects somewhat the amenities of polite behaviour. I do not know whether it is commerce with the sick which gives the doctor an unfortunate sense of superiority; the example of his teachers some of whom have still a bad tradition of rudeness which certain eminent practitioners of the past cultivated as a professional asset; or his early training among the poor patients of a hospital whom he is apt to look upon as of a lower class than himself; but it is certain that no body of men is on the whole so wanting in civility.[31]

Still he presents his medical characters quite sympathetically. True they have their weaknesses and limitations, but they are usually flooded by a warmer light than Maugham affords to men in other professions, the clergy, or the country gentlemen, for example.

In Mrs. Craddock we find a Dr. Ramsay, a bluff, jovial, exemplary country "G.P", who is also guardian of the admirable Miss Ley. He is somewhat snobbish and class-conscious, but he is also endowed with a lively sense of humor and a fine code of professional ethics.

There are two doctors in The Magician. One is the young hero, Dr. Burdon, who almost loses his fiancee, Margaret Dauncey through the evil machinations of the weird Oliver Haddo, a confirmed addict of the black arts. The other is a Dr. Prohoet who has traveled extensively

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[31] W. Somerset Maugham, On A Chinese Screen, New York, George H. Doran Company, c1922, p. 100.

in the Orient and in Egypt and who has a firm belief in the mysterious power of the occult.

Walter Fane in The Painted Veil is a bacteriologist in Hong-Kong, and he is pictured as a true lover of science. Even his wife's infidelity means less to him than his work, and his end would not have been so heroic if he had not deliberately sacrificed his life to further the interests of humanity.

In The Narrow Corner the central character is Dr. Saunders whose illicit activities in his profession have removed him from the Register. He finally drifts to China and there is extremely successful in his practice. He has acquired a sense of humor, absolute tolerance to the vice that surrounds him, and an ironic philosophy of life. Without any sense of morality, without any belief in a higher, finer life, without any family, he is, nevertheless, represented as completely content and satisfied with his life.

Undoubtedly the most sympathetic medical character that Maugham presents is Dr. South in Of Human Bondage. He is a harsh, abrupt old gentleman who does not keep up with the current discoveries in the field of medicine. But he surpasses, however, most modern doctors in his shrewd understanding of human nature and in his warm heart.

Characters from Of Human Bondage

Of Human Bondage provides a galaxy of characters and all so admirably drawn that it is difficult to ascertain which particular ones are most lifelike. First and foremost, we get a complete picture of Philip Carey himself. Philip is presented not only as he appears to his readers who are acquainted with his hidden, inner life, but also as he appears to others who are unaware of this. Mr. Cordell in his life of Maugham says of him:

> To others Philip is often rude, supersensitive, distrustful, proud, self-centered. It is the privilege of the novelist to reveal what is intrinsic and what is facade, what is characteristic and what is accidental. We learn to know Philip as we are able to know few people in fiction, fewer in life. He who seems to his uncle, masters and acquaintances sullen and intractable has a tormenting desire for sympathy and affection, and at the same time he is harassed by an abnormal longing for self-torture. He has charm and power to excite affection in the few who can penetrate his envelope of assumed indifference, but, until near the end of the book when he is humbled and awed by a sense of human misery, his taciturn manner alienates many whom he yearns to like him. His uncle dislikes him; he is unpopular at school and in the accountant's office; but as he grows older and wiser, he accepts more readily men as they are, and is not unpopular at St. Luke's or even in the draper's shop. He is the exact opposite of the thick-skinned and insensible Edward Craddock: Philip is impressionable and is affected by every event he passes through and everyone he meets. He is not plastic and spineless, but he learns. He does not merely reflect experience, like the hero of the average autobiographical novel; he absorbs it. He wrings from life eventually a philosophy

> to sustain him, but only after a series of shattering disillusions.[32]

And not only is Philip drawn to life-like proportions, but so also are the other characters of the novel. We see the vicar, Uncle William, laid bare of all his pretenses; he is self-centered, conceited, thoughtless, but still he is not treated with absolute contempt, for Maugham shares to a large extent in the theory of the French novelist, Georges Duhamel, of "la pitie", i. e. the whole world is somehow a poor and pathetic spectacle and that men should be bound by at least ties of tolerant compassion. One could easily believe that Maugham might re-echo Thoreau's sentiments that most men lead lives of quiet desperation. Maugham presents that strange professor, Tom Perkins, who tries to break down social barriers in that nursery of snobbery, the English public school; he introduces Philip's school mate, Rose, for whom he has conceived boyish hero worship. Next we see Philip's friends at Heidelberg who introduce him to new and startling tenets of philosophy and religion, Weeks, the good-humored cynic, Hayward, the dallying aesthete, Cacilie, outwardly a stolid German fraulein who astonishes everyone by eloping with a Chinese student. In Paris it is a little difficult for Philip to secure the

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[32] Richard A. Cordell, W. Somerset Maugham. New York, Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1937, p. 95.

right perspective for he becomes intrigued with the contrary philosophies of Cronshaw, Flanegan, Clutton and Lawson. At Medical School the traitorous conduct of the friend in whom he has every confidence, Griffiths, almost destroys his faith in his fellow beings. Luckily he then meets Thorpe Athelny and his kind-hearted family who show him that human nature is not quite as callous and time-serving as Philip now fears. Finally as an interne in the out-patients' department Philip sees men and women under the bitterest yoke of poverty and illness, and in him then is born a strange tenderness for man who despite harrowing circumstances still retains an innate potentiality for goodness and often displays a gallant and courageous fortitude. What a parade of individuals stream by Philip in that grim carnival of life!

The women that Maugham has assigned to enter into Philip's life with the exception of Mildred do not influence him to such a large degree. His Aunt Louisa is a pious, self-effacing creature who is completely dominated by her husband. Miss Wilkinson is satirically drawn as affected, gushing and sensuous. There is Fanny Price who sacrifices everything to art. This sacrifice is barren and futile because she is totally without artistic talent and finally in sheer desperation

hangs herself. Mildred, however, belongs in that great collection of women who remain for all time in the memory as do Becky Sharpe, Nanna, Emma Bovary, Madame Sappho. She is a completely despicable character, yet we read those episodes in which she figures with breathless delight which proves that man is both attracted and repelled by the repulsive and distasteful. Mr. Cordell says concerning Mildred:

> Mildred is far more terrifying than Iago, that incredible link between the Vice of the morality play and the absolute villain of the melodrama; more terrifying than Hedda Gabler, a worthless neurotic who does not touch us because she touches no one in the play. But not only does the author tell us that Philip is in love with Mildred Rogers, emaciated and dyspeptic, vulgar and shabby of mind, odiously genteel; the miracle happens when this love is made credible. The reader agonizes with Philip who is gentle, honest and intelligent, but miserably a slave to his racking passion. Her very name is grotesquely common; Philip as well as the reader is aware of her thousand petty dishonesties, her pretentiousness and shallowness, her cockney notions of gentility and refinement, her incapacity for gratitude, and her insensitiveness to others' sufferings; but although as much aware of her unworthiness as is the reader, Philip is helpless. It is a proof of Somerset Maugham's genius that we do not question Philip's love for Mildred. With what obvious delight the author fills in the amazing portrait! Mildred horrifies us; we shudder when her name appears on a page, but she fascinates us at the same time. When she finally drifts out of the story, a diseased prostitute, we feel a tremenduous relief, but at the same time a vague regret that we have done with this monstrous creature.[33]

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[33] *Ibid*.pp. 98-9.

Maugham presents us with the exact opposite of Mildred in the person of Norah Nesbitt, a kind, cultivated, good-humored woman who is deeply in love with Philip. Philip paradoxically enough cannot love her, thus fulfilling the author's observation that one cannot love whom one should love. Like Racine he believes at all times that the ungovernable power of passion overrules reason and will-power.

Sally Athelny, the last woman to enter into Philip's life is a clean-limbed, sensible young girl without any intellectual pretensions but with all the qualifications of woman, the eternal feminine. She expects no undying protestations of love; she seeks for no huge rewards for merely being a beautiful creature. She brings Philip quiet affection, and we hope, and the author almost makes us believe peace at long last.

More feminine characters

Against parasitical women Maugham directs his most bitter satire. They are able to destroy both the happiness and the usefulness of the men whom they victimize. Mrs. Craddock was a vigorous portrayal of a woman of courage and ability who broke away from the Victorian traditions that restrained her social class from

individualistic work, then lapsed in marriage into a neurotic parasite without daring or ambition.

Rosie Driffield, the central character of Cakes and Ale is almost as superbly characterized as Mildred. She is a notoriously faithless creature, and yet so fresh and charming, so like a dairymaid on the farmstead of the gods, that even the most puritanical can not quite condemn her. She begins humbly enough as a barmaid, and a barmaid who lives up to all the leering traditions of her art, at that. She becomes the mistress of Driffield, later marries him, yet even then is richly profligate of her favors. Finally to cap the climax, she runs off with a common enough creature, the perfect Philistine, to whom she has been passionately devoted for many years. Rosie is like a clear mountain pool, refreshing not to one solitary bather, but to all who come to share the delights of the crystal waters. Ashenden, one of the author's favorite creations and the narrator of the book, although many years younger than Rosie enjoys a pleasant interlude with her and becomes somewhat jealous when he realizes that she is equally as friendly with a half-dozen or so.

Rosie's philosophy is all summed up in the following:

> "You don't expect me to believe that he gave it (a rich sable cape which one of her admirers presented to Rosie) to you just out of friendship."

> "He might have. Anyhow he's gone back to Amsterdam, and who knows when he'll be back?"
>
> "He isn't the only one either."
>
> I looked at Rosie now, with angry, hurt resentful eyes; she smiled at me, and I wish I knew how to describe the sweet kindliness of her beautiful smile; her voice was exquisitely gentle."
>
> "Oh, my dear, why d'you bother your head about any others? What harm does it do you? Don't I give you a good time? Aren't you happy when you're with me?"
>
> "Awfully."
>
> "Well, then. It's so silly to be fussy and jealous. Why not be happy with what you can get? Enjoy yourself while you have the chance; I say; we shall all be dead in a hundred years and what will anything matter then? Let's have a good time while we can."[34]

If Maugham followed the strict tenets of poetic justice, Rosie should have ended miserably, her beauty gone, forgotten by her lovers. But he has little regard for the moral recompense that is given a good life, and the degredation that should be fostered on the evil. Rosie spends her last days in New York, left extremely well off by "Lord" George with whom she has run off, and surrounded by friends who amuse and entertain her;

> Rosie was at least seventy. She was wearing a very smart sleeveless frock of green chiffon heavily "diamante", cut square at the neck and very short. It fitted like a bursting glove. By her shape I gathered

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[34] W. Somerset Maugham, Cakes and Ale, New York, Doubleday, Doran, 1930,pp. 230-1.

> that she wore rubber corsets. Her nails were blood-coloured and her eyebrows plucked. She was stout, and she had a double chin; the skin of her bosom, although she had powdered it freely, was red, and her face was red too.[35] She looked well and healthy and full of beans.

Rosie finds that American life suits her infinitely more than did her old London amusements:

> I don't seem to have much time for reading now. Sunday's my great day. I think the Sunday papers are lovely over here. You don't have anything like them in England. Then, of course, I play a lot of bridge; I'm crazy about contract.[36]

The final ironic note is struck on the last page of the novel. Rosie is little concerned about the great fame that Edward Driffield has won for himself, for at heart a writer to her is still a poor substitute for a man. Her one great love had been "Lord" George, that bluff and hearty business man:

> (Ashenden scans his picture). "I wonder what it was you saw in him."
>
> Rosie's eyes travelled to the large picture on the wall. It was an enlarged photograph of Lord George in a carved gilt frame. It looked as if it might have been taken soon after their arrival in America; perhaps at the time of their marriage. It was a three-quarter length. It showed him in a long frock coat, tightly buttoned, and a tall silk hat cocked rakishly on one side of his head; there was a large rose in his buttonhole; under one arm he carried a silver-headed cane and smoke curled from a big cigar that he held in

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[35] Ibid. pp. 291-2.

[36] Ibid. pp. 307-8.

> his right hand. He had a heavy moustache, waxed at the ends, a saucy look in his eye, and in his bearing an arrogant swagger. In his tie was a horseshoe of diamonds. He looked like a publican dressed up in his best to go to the derby.
>
> "I'll tell you," said Rosie. "He was always such a perfect gentleman."[37]

Maugham's opinion about character types

It is interesting to find from Maugham's own words exactly what he thinks of typing different characters:

> One reads that no one exactly resembles anyone else, and that every man is unique, and in a way this is true, but it is a truth easy to exaggerate: in practice men are very much alike. They are divided into comparatively few types. The same circumstances mould them in the same way. Certain characteristics infer certain others. You can, like the paleontologist reconstruct the animal from a single bone. The characters which have been a popular form of letters since Theophrastus, and the humours of the seventeenth century, prove that men sort themselves into few marked categories. Indeed this is the foundation of realism which depends for its attractiveness on recognition. The romantic method turns its attention to the exceptional; the realistic to the usual. The slightly abnormal circumstances in which men live in the countries where life is primitive or the environment alien to them, emphasize their ordinariness so that it gains a character of its own; and when they are in themselves extraordinary, which of course they sometimes are, the want of the usual restraints permit them to develop their kinks with a freedom that in more civilized communities can be but hardly won.[38]

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[37] Ibid. p. 309.

[38] Somerset Maugham, Op. cit. p. 204.

Maugham's use of actual people as models

One of the debatable questions that is propounded in regard to an author's characterization is whether or not it has been taken from a living model, and if so from whom. This endless quest of determining just who are the models engages literary detectives from Professor Manley of Chicago who tries to discover just who Chaucer's prototypes were for his Canterbury pilgrims to Maugham's contemporaries who try to find out if Edward Driffield was really Thomas Hardy, or just who Mildred was, or what actress is Maugham portraying in Julia Lambert. Maugham curiously enough has received more than his just share of blame because he has drawn many of his characters from living persons, and this criticism seems, at least to me, to be sheer stuff and nonsense. Certainly since literature had its first origins authors have had models for their characters. Shakesperean students can name many of the great bard's models. Coming down to Turgenev we have his words that he could not hope to create a character unless he had some definite person in mind to lead off with.

Maugham states the following in regard to his use of living persons as a rough model:

> I insist that this is creation (this using living persons as models). We know very little even of the

> persons we know most intimately; we do not know them enough to transfer them to the pages of a book and make human beings of them. People are too elusive, too shadowy to be copied; and they are also too incoherent and contradictory. The writer does not copy his originals; he takes what he wants from them, a few traits that have caught his attention, a turn of mind that has fired his imagination, and therefrom constructs his character. He is not concerned whether it is a truthful likeness; he is concerned only to create a plausible harmony convenient for his own purposes. So different may be the finished product from the original that it must be a common experience of authors to be accused of having drawn a lifelike portrait of a certain person when they had in mind someone quite different. Further, it is just chance whether the author chooses his models from persons with whom he is intimately connected or not. It is often enough for him to have caught a glimpse of someone in a tea-shop or chatted with him for a quarter of an hour in a ship's smoking room. All he needs is that tiny fertile substratum which he can then build up by means of his experience of life, his knowledge of human nature and his native intuition.[39]

or: Sometimes the author takes a very commonplace person and from him invents a character who is noble, self-controlled and courageous. He has seen in that person a significance that has escaped those he lived with...............The physical traits of a man influence his character and contrariwise his character is expressed, at least in the rough, in his appearance. You cannot make a tall man short and otherwise keep him the same. A man's height gives him a different outlook on his environment and so changes his character. Nor to cover your tracks can you make a little brunette into a massive blonde. You will have to leave them very much as they are or you will lose what it was that moved you to draw a character from them.[40]

Maugham's handling of plot and depiction of

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[39] Ibid. p. 212.

[40] Ibid. pp. 214-5.

character go together in such inseparable harmony that it is often difficult to say whether he has taken an experience which he has had and used that as a theme by adding a group of episodes to illustrate it; or whether he has employed persons with whom he may have been intimately or casually acquainted and used them as the foundation for the carrying out of his plot.

Maugham's attitude toward people can be given in no better way than by quoting two or three quite long passages in which he tells exactly how he sees people:

> I have seen men since as I saw them then (when he served in the outpatients' department at St. Thomas's,) and thus have I drawn them. It may not be a true picture and I know that many have thought it an unpleasant picture. It is doubtless partial, for naturally I have seen men through my own idiosyncrasies. A buoyant, optimistic, healthy and sentimental person would have seen the same people quite differently. I can only claim to have seen them coherently. Many writers seem to me not to observe at all, but to create their characters in stock sizes from images of their own fancy. They are like draughtsmen who draw their figures from recollections of the antique and have never attempted to draw from the living model. At their best they can only give living shape to the fantasies of their own mind. If their minds are noble they can give you noble figures and perhaps it does not matter if they lack the infinite complication of common life.[41]
>
> I have always worked from the living model. I remember that once in the dissecting room when I was going over my "part" with the demonstrator, he asked

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[41] Ibid. pp. 67-8.

> me what some nerve was and I did not know. He told me; whereupon I remonstrated, for it was in the wrong place. Nevertheless, he insisted that it was the nerve I had been in vain looking for. I complained of the abnormality and he, smiling, said that in anatomy it was the normal that was uncommon. I was only annoyed at the time, but the remark sank into my mind and since then it has been forced upon me that it was true of men as well as of anatomy. The normal is what you find but rarely. The normal is an ideal. It is a picture that one fabricates of the average characteristics of men, and to find them all in a single man is hardly to be expected. It is this false picture that the writers I have spoken of take as their model and it is because they describe what is so exceptional that they seldom achieve the effect of life. Selfishness and kindliness, idealism and sensuality, vanity, shyness, disinterestedness, courage, laziness, nervousness, obstinacy, and diffidence, they can all exist in a single person and form a plausible harmony. It has taken a long time to persuade readers of the truth of this.[42]

When we speak of character delineation, there is always one factor that must be considered and that is the "personal equation" of the reading audience. This becomes such a debatable point that it is almost with trepidation that I here mention it. To some Somerset Maugham may be thought to wield a cynical and world-weary philosophy that might be definitely harmful if practised on a whole-sale basis. In fact it is Maugham's cynicism that has been most attacked, and, perhaps, at this point it might be well to insert a few words concerning this.

Maugham's cynicism

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[42] *Ibid*. p. 69.

It is commonly said that he portrays men as much worse than they really are. In a limited sense that might be true. But all Maugham really has done is to bring into bold relief certain traits that many writers pretend do not exist.

He certainly does not resemble in any respect the ancient cynic philosophers who held pleasure in contempt. He is too urbane and possesses too lively a sense of humor to be gruff and irascible, and is so willing to accept people and situations as they are that he cannot be really a fault-finder. Yet this criticism has some basis for there is a strain of the misanthrope in his make-up. He confesses that he is unable to feel any great affection for his fellow man, nor can he wholeheartedly believe in their altruism. Maugham has been labelled cynical for asserting that passion does not last forever, that there is no ultimate truth, that "a thing of beauty is not necessarily a joy forever", that evil has no explanation, that Christianity practised too literally is sometimes impractical, that vice is not always punished nor virtue always rewarded, that sexual irregularity is not the most mortal of sins, and so on through quite an ironical list. Still what is there in these statements that demands such rigorous refutation?

Maugham says in regard to this matter:

> I think what has chiefly struck me in human beings is their lack of consistency. I have never seen people all of a piece. It has amazed me that the most incongruous traits should exist in the same person and for all that yield a plausible harmony. I have often asked myself how characteristics, seemingly irreconcilable, can exist in the same person. I have known crooks who were capable of self-sacrifice, sneak-thieves who were sweet-natured and harlots for whom it was a point of honour to give good value for money. The only explanation I can offer is that so instinctive is each one's conviction that he is unique in the world and privileged, that he feels that, however wrong, it might be for others, what he for his part does, if not natural and right, is at least venial. The contrast that I have found in people has interested me, but I do not think that I have unduly emphasized it. The censure that from time to time has been passed on me is due perhaps to the fact that I have not expressly condemned what was bad in the characters of my invention and praised what was good. It must be a fault in me that I am not gravely shocked at the sins of others unless they personally affect me, and even when they do I have learnt at least to excuse them. It is meet not to expect too much of others. You should be grateful when they treat you well, but unperturbed when they treat you ill.[43]

Because Maugham sees men as they really are he gives us sharply contrasting, clear-cut individuals, not individualities as Dickens has given us with Micawber always stating that something will turn up, or Barkis that he is willing. His characters fall into the broad outlines of the generic class, but he has built them up into individual characters by giving them specific and unique

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[43] Ibid. pp. 56-7.

traits.

Static or kinetic characters

In regard to the technical classification of static or kinetic characters it is difficult to differentiate sharply. The static character remains unchanged throughout the course of the story; the kinetic may rise to great heights or sink to the nether depths. In any case it is evident that some metamorphosis has taken place. Philip in Of Human Bondage is perhaps Maugham's best example of a kinetic or round character. At the end of the book he is a far wiser, more tolerant and more sympathetic character. Charles Strickland in The Moon and Sixpence is also another important kinetic character. In the light of conventional and social mores he has become a callous, debased creature. In the light of selfless, almost inhuman devotion to art and self-expression he has grown enormously. In Cakes and Ale Edward Driffield changed. His success bore with it the seed of destruction for he had been cut off from the material that was the very occasion of his success. His success had changed him in the vision of his old associates; they are no longer at ease with him. On the other hand, Rosie remains very

much the same. At seventy she differs very little from thirty. For in connection with a static character it does not matter what they do externally; it is only a change in their character that places them in this category. Louise Frith in The Narrow Corner remains more or less the same despite the tragedy that enters her life, a cultivated, sophisticated woman who nevertheless lives for the most part by instinct, and is capable of knowing no real sorrow or remorse. For the most part the rest of Maugham's characters, Blanche Stroeve, Kitty Fane, Bertha Ley, Mildred, Julia Lambert, Captain Nichols, Dr. Saunders, fall into the static classification. To the end they remain consistently true to type.

Maugham's creations slightly distorted

But the very multiplicity that enables him to create these characters prevents him from securing perfect fidelity in their creation. Realism is more or less relative to the writer. The most realistic of writers by the very intensity of his focus slightly distorts his characters. Of necessity he must see them through his own eyes.

Maugham's indirect method of character delineation

In considering the character as a personal presence

Maugham almost invariably uses the indirect method of delineation. He does not convey the traits of character directly to the reader except in a few of his short stories. He never labels. For the most part he builds up his character by minute, careful detail, then leaves the reader to judge for himself.

Maugham little concerned with psychological analysis

In presenting his characters Maugham employs little psychological analysis. He prefers action, and the way in which his characters react to various situations becomes his method of delving into their intuitive processes. He suggests very plausibly that if one wishes to learn sociology one should turn to a sociologist, or psychology to a psychologist. He believes the main purpose of a novel should be to entertain. In his preface to Cosmopolitans, a collection of very short stories, Maugham discusses the purpose of a novel:

> The University of Columbia a little while ago very kindly sent me a little book entitled Modern Fiction written by two of its professors. I read it with interest and edification.....It treats of no book that it does not make one wish to read again. It is tolerant, perspicacious and stimulating. But there is one thing about it that very much surprised me. The books of which it treats are discussed in the most improving way. Their technique is acutely analyzed. Their value as psychological, sociological or ethical documents is estimated. But I can find nowhere a

> reference to their entertainment. So far as I can make out these two professors in all the years during which they have taught the ardent young who attended their lectures never hinted to them that a novel should be read for fun. The novel may stimulate you to think. It may satisfy your aesthetic sense. It may arouse your moral emotions. But if it does not entertain you it is a bad novel.[44]

Further methods of character delineation

Another method that the textbooks assure us is an excellent one for the delineation of a character is through the reports of other characters. Maugham uses this method to a large extent. Many of his novels employ the "I" form, and it is this "I" who imparts much information regarding the other characters. In this way we get not only a portrait of the person described, but further insight into the personality of the narrator. Clayton Hamilton says concerning this:

> If the mere speech of a fictitious figure be reported with sufficient fidelity to truth, it is possible to convey through this expedient alone a very vivid sense of character.[45]

Maugham's capability in handling dialogue

Maugham has always had natural lucidity and an ability to write witty, spontaneous dialogue. It is this

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[44] W. Somerset Maugham, Cosmopolitans. Garden City, Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1936, preface.

[45] Clayton Hamilton, A Manual of the Art of Fiction. Garden City, Doubleday, Page & Co., 1924, p. 91.

gift which made him such a successful dramatist, a gift which Henry James and many other eminent novelists have lacked. Maugham speaks about this gift and about his various shortcomings:

> At an early age I discovered my limitations and it seemed to me that the only sensible thing was to aim at what excellence I could. I had little gift for metaphor; the original and striking simile seldom occurred to me. Poetic flights and the great imaginative sweep were beyond my powers. I could admire them in others as I could admire their far-fetched tropes and the unusual but suggestive language in which they clothed their thoughts, but my own invention never presented me with such embellishments..........On the other hand I had an acute power of observation and it seemed to me that I could see a great many things that other people missed. I could put down in clear terms what I saw. I had a logical sense, and if no great feeling for the richness and strangeness of words, at all events a lively appreciation of their sound.[46]

Maugham's characters influenced by their environment

Another means by which a character comes to life is through the presentation of a very apropos environment. Maugham's South Sea characters stand out vividly because they are influenced by the lush and teeming life of the rich tropics where conventions matter so little and where life is pleasant and easy.

Maugham's chief concern human behaviour

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[46] Maugham, op. cit. pp. 29-30.

There is nothing that intrigues Maugham quite so much as human behaviour, especially the deviations of seemingly average, normal, righteous people. He can make an unconventional ethic, a defense of exceptional conduct, or a denunciation of plausible conduct as exciting as violent melodrama.

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CHAPTER V

SETTING

Maugham always possessed by urge to see world

One of Mr. Maugham's convictions is that life should be lived to its fullest; his motto is always "carpe diem"; he wants life to be gay, active and adventurous. One of the most pathetic spectacles to him is the sight of some individual merely existing, never breasting forth into the strong current, but letting things take their course in some stagnant backwater. He bemoans Philip's uncle and aunt's wasted lives in Of Human Bondage and Blanche Stroeve's in The Moon and Sixpence. This urge to see the world must have been experienced by him at an early age for in 1904 in The Merry-Go-Round he has Frank Hurrell say:

> And the dull stupidity of it (referring to his life in London) just chokes me so that I pant for the fresh air. I want to sail in ships, and battle with huricane and storm; I want to go far away among men who actually do things--to new countries, Canada and Australia, where they fight hand to hand with primitive nature: I desire the seething scum of great cities, where there is no confounded policeman to keep you virtuous. My whole soul aches for the East, for Egypt and India and Japan; I want to know the corrupt, eager life of the Malays and the violent adventures of South Sea Islands. I may not get an answer to the riddle of life out in the open world, but I shall get nearer to it than here; I can get

> nothing more out of books and civilization. I want to see life and death, and the passions and the virtues and vices of men face to face, uncovered; I want really to live my life while there's time: I want to have something to look back to in my old age.[47]

Nor had this Halliburton, Kipling urge to see the remote sections of the world abated when he wrote Of Human Bondage in 1915, for Philip Carey also shares Hurrell's desire to travel, not only to the Orient but also to Spain. Philip's interest in Spain is prompted by Thorpe Athelny who is very familiar with this country and who spurs his interest by telling him of Toledo, showing him copies of El Greco's paintings and by narrating colorful stories of Calderon, Velasquez, Fray Louis De Leon, Cervantes, Espinal, St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Theresa, and Lope De Vega.

> Now the goal seemed very near. He would have finished his appointment at St. Luke's by the middle of the following year, and then he would go to Spain; he could afford to spend several months there, rambling up and down the land which stood to him for romance; after that he would get a ship and go to the East. Life was before him and time of no account. He could wander for years if he chose, in unfrequented places, amid strange peoples, where life was led in strange ways. He did not know what he sought or what his journeys would bring him; but he had a feeling that he would learn something new about life and gain some clue to the mystery that he had solved only to find more mysterious.[48]

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[47] W. Somerset Maugham, The Merry-Go-Round. London, Hutchinson and Company, 1901, p. 249.

[48] W. Somerset Maugham, Of Human Bondage. New York, Modern Library Press, 1915, p. 734.

Mr. Maugham's dreams to see the glamour of strange places and distant lands were realized. For years he has traveled through Europe, Asia, America and the islands of the Southern Pacific where so many of his short stories are laid. Travel has been one of the greatest influences working upon him; it has given his works that cosmopolitan quality which recommends them to so many readers. Maugham derives subjects and inspiration from different faces, new scenes, varying customs. He knows only too well how Kipling lost his flare when he abandoned his nomadic wanderings and settled down to become a conservative English country gentleman. He is unlike Jane Austen who never left her very circumscribed radius, Eden Phillpots who speaks solely of Devonshire, Arnold Bennett who was only great when he wrote of the "five towns", Thomas Hardy who wrote about Wessex, although Maugham was familiar enough with the Kentish countryside to fill a number of books. His strong yen to travel is an indication solely of that inordinate curiosity which has made not Kent but "the whole world his oyster".

Maugham's qualifications to write books with foreign settings

Maugham is ably qualified to write books in which

foreign climes figure as setting. He is a realist and displays no false pretentious feelings about exotic lands such as one might find in an advertisement for a Cook's Tour. Nor does he debunk foreign travel as does Twain in his Innocents Abroad, for Maugham possesses a wider tolerance and a broader culture than our great American humorist. What would irritate Twain, amuses him. Cordell says about this acceptance of people on their own terms:

> He accepts as far as possible life and people with a bland and kindly scepticism, and if he is confronted by mystery he cannot penetrate, he is not ashamed to be humble before it. Perhaps his best qualification (aside from the fact that he is an excellent writer) is that he has greater interest in people than in places. Few readers today can tolerate long descriptions of scenery, and rhapsodies over beauty in far-away places are extremely tiresome.[49]

Never does Maugham make us forget the fact that Samoa, Borneo, the Malay States, Burma, Peking, Hawai, Shanghai and the wild fastness of the jungles are real places where men and women exist and perform the same functions and experience to some degree the same emotions as do all of us.

In speaking of the setting for Maugham's novels it might be well to catalogue the locales that he has employed:

[49] Richard A. Cordell, W. Somerset Maugham. New York, Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1937, p. 291.

France: Mr. Maugham was born in Paris and there passed the early years of his childhood. In The Moon and Sixpence he says of Paris: "I have been to Paris a hundred times, and it never fails to give me a thrill of excitement: I can never walk its streets without feeling myself on the verge of adventure."[50] It was in Paris that Philip spent some time studying art. Paris also figures as the locale for several scenes in The Moon and Sixpence, Ashenden, Mrs. Craddock, and The Magician. For the past few years Mr. Maugham has lived on the Riviera, and this furnishes the background for most of his recent short stories.

Germany: Maugham spent a year studying at Heidelberg, and although he never became officially a member of the University, he took advantage of the lectures, library and intellectual comradeship it afforded him. It was there as Mr. Cordell points out:

> Here he was free and could breathe again. His companions introduced him to the pleasures of art and poetry and the theatre. He stood on a hill overlooking the Rhine valley and was scourged and exhilarated for the first time by the mystic, almost unbearable feeling for beauty. Over mugs of beer he and his friends debated the great and insoluble problems of life. He attended Kuno Fischer's

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[50] W. Somerset Maugham, The Moon and Sixpence. New York, Doran, 1919, p. 74.

> lectures on Schopenhauer. He cast off the misfit mantle of Christianity which his uncle and masters had forced upon him. He knew the keen delights of the free play of mind on mind, and he exulted in his emancipation with the fierce and arrogant intolerance of youth. And at Heidelberg, he decided upon his lifework--writing.[51]

It was also at Heidelberg that he first saw the plays of Sudermann and saw Ibsen enjoying a glass of ale. Yet with the exception of Of Human Bondage, where Philip too spends some time at Heidelberg, Maugham seldom uses Germany as a setting.

Italy: Although Mr. Maugham has traveled considerably in Italy, he does not often employ it as setting with the exception of a few short stories. Part of Mrs. Craddock is laid there, and also a few scenes of The Merry-Go-Round. Mediaeval Italy is the scene of his only historical romance, The Making of a Saint, but at the time he was unfamiliar with the country and must have gleaned his information of the country from reading or from travel books on Italy.

Spain: It is one of Maugham's favorite countries and has supplied him with much material that he has utilized in Don Fernando, a rambling, discursive book on the Spain of the Renaissance and in Andalusia: Sketches and Impressions. Spain is also used as a background for

[51] Op. cit., p. 17.

countless short stories. Maugham has always been interested in Spanish art and literature; Andalusia is the fervent outpouring of a young man almost passionately devoted to the romantic landscape of Spain, and its golden, mellow sunlight. But in typical Maugham fashion he can also see the shortcomings of the Spanish race.

United States: Very little is laid here. One chapter in Cakes and Ale describes Rosie as Ashenden sees her in Yonkers, New York, and parts of his short stories employ the United States as background.

Orient: Almost all of Maugham's writings since the World War have had their setting in the Orient or in islands of the Southern Pacific. In this respect he may be classed with Stevenson, Kipling, Conrad and others for like them he has painted a picture of Britains living in these remote outposts. From his travels in the East Maugham feels that he has added much to his mental stature:

> When I recovered from my illness the war was over. (Maugham during the war had been actively connected with espionage and diplomatic activities.) I went to China. I went with the feelings of any traveler interested in art and curious to see what he could of the manners of a strange people whose civilization was of great antiquity; but I went also with the notions that I must surely run across men of various sorts whose acquaintances would enlarge

my experiences. I did. I filled my notebooks with descriptions of places and persons and the stories they suggested. I became aware of the specific benefit I was capable of getting from travel. This was freedom of the spirit on one hand, and on the other, the collection of all manner of persons who might serve my purpose..........

I have never been much of a sightseer. So much enthusiasm has been expended over the great sights of the world that I can summon up very little when I am confronted with them.....My interest has been in men and the lives they lead. I am shy of making acquaintances with strangers, but I was fortunate enough to have on my journeys a companion who had an inestimable social gift. He had an amiability of disposition that enabled him in very short order to make friends with people in ships, clubs, bar-rooms and hotels, so that through him I was able to get into easy contact with an immense number of persons whom otherwise I should have known only by acquaintance or from a distance.

I made acquaintance with them with just the degree of intimacy that suited me. It was an intimacy born on their side of ennui or loneliness, that withheld few secrets, but one that separation irrevocably broke. It was close because its limits were settled in advance. Looking back on that long procession I cannot think of anyone who had not something to tell me that I was glad to know. I seemed to myself to develop the sensitiveness of a photographic plate. It did not matter to me if the picture I formed was true; what mattered was that with the help of a lively imagination I could make of each person I met a plausible harmony. It was the most entrancing game in which I had ever engaged...........

I came back from each of my journeys a little different. In my youth I had read a great deal, not because I supposed that it would benefit me, but from curiosity and the desire to learn; I traveled because it amused me, and to get material that would be of use to me; it never occured to me that my new experiences were having an effect upon me, and it was not till long afterwards that I saw my early years, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] might serve my purpose.

. . . .

I have never used such of a talent [illegible] [illegible] of the world [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] distance.

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] in which I believe [illegible]

. . . .

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

> how they had formed my character. In contact with all these strange people I lost the smoothness that I had acquired when, leading the humdrum life of a man of letters, I was one of the stones in a bag. I got back my jagged edges. I was at last myself. I ceased to travel because I felt that travel could give me nothing more. I was capable of no new development. I had sloughed the arrogance of culture. My mood was complete acceptance. I asked from nobody more than he could give me. I had learnt tolerance. I was pleased with the goodness of my fellows; I was not distressed by their badness.[52]

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[52] Maugham, op. cit. pp. 202-3-4.

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CHAPTER VI

POINT OF VIEW

Classifications of point of view

In any narrative one phase that holds an important position is the point of view. Naturally it is impossible to get an absolute, unequivocal and unbiased outlook on any piece of narrative work. Different incidents will appear in different lights from the standpoint of various individuals.

Professor Hamilton says in speaking of the point of view in narrative that it may be grouped under two classifications, either external or internal. "A story seen internally is narrated in the first person by one of its participants; a story seen externally is narrated in the third person by a mind aloof from the events depicted." 53

Of course, the point of view is not quite as simple a matter as it would appear from that somewhat sketchy differentiation.

The internal point of view

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53 Clayton Hamilton, A Manual of the Art of Fiction. Garden City, Doubleday, Page & Co., 1924, p. 121.

Under the internal point of view we find that of the leading character, the hero, and classic examples of this might be Robinson Crusoe or Henry Esmond. Maugham employs this type in Ashenden: or the British Agent, a novel loosely composed of several short stories with one central character. Ashenden, the British secret service agent in Geneva tells his experiences, but in almost all his narration we find that after a proper and convincing background has been drawn he relates some incident that has been told him. Hence it is seen that we secure divergent points of view, that of the main narrator, Ashenden, and that of the secondary narrators. However, most of the stories within the story are so flavored with the author's observations and comments that one can safely say that the point of view of the leading character is quite consistently observed. Maugham is quick to realize the advantages of this form. He realizes that he can give his narration a more complete objectivity. As he is primarily interested in devising a compact, dramatic story such as one might tell at a dinner party or around a cheerful, crackling fire, and not in analyzing any complex, mental processes, he uses this type with high success. Furthermore, he throws

off such casual, elusive hints about the narrator's personality that he happily characterizes him without ever making a single, direct comment. Maugham's narrator is always like himself a writer and in this way it is made plausible why the events are related with such fullness, detail and lack of reticence. Cakes and Ale is undoubtedly Maugham's finest example of this point of view.

Another subdivision of this internal point of view is that of some minor or subsidiary character in the novel. This is employed by Maugham in The Moon and Sixpence when the author without being an intimate of Strickland, nevertheless, builds up his story from varied and scattered sources and from conversations with friends and acquaintances of the zealot painter.

The external point of view

Maugham's chef d'oeuvre, Of Human Bondage is written from an external point of view, not from the totally omniscient point of view which allows the author to lay claim to any narrative material that he may want and enter into the minds of his characters at will, but from that of a partially omniscient point of view. Thus Maugham can record Philip's every thought

but he is content to merely report the conversation and actions of the other characters and their effect upon Philip. Mrs. Craddock, Theatre, The Making of a Saint, The Bishop's Apron, The Narrow Corner, The Magician and The Explorer are all further types of this genre. Maugham usually centers his interest upon one character and uses that character more or less as a pivotal point to reflect upon the other characters with whom he comes into contact.

In many of his short stories like his French model, DeMaupassant, Maugham employs the rigidly restricted point of view that of merely taking an observant point of view totally outside the ken of any of his characters. Liza of Lambeth which is almost a transcript of life in the London slums maintains this strict objectivity to a large degree.

Personal or impersonal tone

Another interesting point to consider that is kindred to the point of view is the tone which the novelist adopts in the writing of his novels. Narrative writing may have either a personal or an impersonal tone. Many writers take the epic-like, impersonal tone that we find in the Odyssey, the Aeneid or many of Scott's

novels. In no novel with the possible exception of Liza of Lambeth, and that is extremely doubtful for many of Maugham's philosophical reflections about poverty and its effects creep into this, does Maugham employ the impersonal tone. He does not make the digressions, true, that we find in Fielding or Thackeray, nor does he as Howells said of Thackeray: "stand about in his scene, talking it over with his hands in his pockets, interrupting the action, and spoiling the illusion in which alone the truth of art resides."[54] Maugham presents his characters objectively; it is in their conversations, their little asides, their reflections that his own personality comes forth just as clearly as it does in his Summing Up.

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[54] Ibid.p. 134.

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CHAPTER VII

EMPHASIS

Clayton Hamilton says: "The importance of the principle of emphasis is recognized in all the arts; for it is only by an application of this principle that the artist can gather and group in the background the subsidiary elements of his work, while he flings into vivid relief those elements that embody the essence of the thing he has to say." [55]

Now just as emphasis in oratory, painting, sculpture, music and drama is essential, so does it rank in high importance in the narrative technique of the novel. Mr. Maugham being a craftsman and a professional man of letters naturally recognizes this.

Ways of securing emphasis

One method by which emphasis is secured is by the position in which the material is presented, sometimes by placing the most important material at the end, sometimes at the beginning. Aside from the fact that Maugham makes his beginnings interesting and entertaining

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[55] Clayton Hamilton, A Manual of the Art of Fiction. Garden City, Doubleday, Page & Co., 1924, p.140.

enough to catch our fancy and arouse our expectations, he usually secures his emphasis by terminal position. His chapters almost always end with some brilliant epigram, some short, pithy statement, some bald remark, some startling denouement. Maugham's short stories do this almost constantly, either by some clever variation of the trick ending or by some illuminating remark that casts an entirely different light on the events or characters that have gone before.

Maugham never employs that method of securing emphasis which was inaugurated by Daudet and De Maupassant, namely stringing a series of blanks or asterisks across a page. He writes with a healthy, straightforward frankness, recognizing no phase of life as immoral, yet never becomming offensive or indecent. The French have further employed this method to denote a distinct pause, a suspension of some portion of the story. Maugham ignores this and goes on unrolling his details, vividly, clearly and tersely.

Direct proportion in Maugham's novels

In most of his novels Maugham secures emphasis by the further method of direct proportion, i. e.,

assigning more time and more attention to important and essential scenes, thus bringing them forth in clear and bold relief. Despite the number of characters, the multitude of scenes, Philip Carey stands out distinctly from his fellow characters, as does Mrs. Craddock, Louise Frith, Rosie, Charles Strickland and a host of others who people his novels.

Maugham's static characters give emphasis by iteration

Although Maugham does not often utilize the method of securing emphasis by iteration that Dickens brought to such a high peak, he does secure emphasis by reiteration in having his static characters often doing the same thing. Philip's aunt and uncle have an unchangeable routine, as does Edward Craddock, Alroy Kear, Julia Lambert. Furthermore most of his characters run rather true to form, their true personality popping out at crucial moments.

Maugham's use of antithesis to secure emphasis

With Maugham's natural gift of irony it is no small wonder that he uses antithesis to secure a very effective kind of emphasis. His characters always stand in more or less contradistinction. Against Rosie he

plays up Mrs. Barton Trafford, against Strickland's refiend, nagging first wife we have his primitive, native mistress, against the sophisticated woman of the world, Julia Lambert, we have the naive, ingenuous Lettice, against the pathetic idealism of Erik Christessen we have the blatant sensuality of Fred Blake, against the cultivated Mrs. Craddock we have her Philistine husband, and so on. It is almost solely antithesis of character that Maugham uses. Rarely do we find him employing antithesis of sense that was such a common device in both Scott and Victor Hugo.

Maugham's use of surprising sentiments

Maugham secures emphasis also by expressing surprising sentiments, utterly different from those commonly accepted, which shock the reader into startled attention. Even in The Summing Up in which one would not expect him to bother with this device he uses it, as he had so often used it in putting almost paradoxical sentiments into the mouths of his creations.

> I have never, except by an effort of will, wished that the passing moment might linger so that I could get more enjoyment from it, for even when it has brought me something I had immensely looked forward to, my imagination in the very moment of

> fulfilment has been busy with the problematical delight of whatever was to come.[56]

or

> There are people who despise possessions. Of course when they say that it ill becomes the artist thus to cumber himself they may be right, but it is not a view that artists themselves have held. They have never lived from choice in the garrets in which their admirers like to see them.[57]

or

> In my twenties the critics said I was brutal, in my thirties they said I was flippant, in my forties they said I was cynical, in my fifties they said I I was competent, and now in my sixties they say I am superficial.[58]

or

> I have not been afraid of excess: excess on occasion is exhilarating. It prevents moderation from acquiring the deadening effect of a habit.[59]

Emphasis by suspense

Emphasis by suspense is employed to a large extent in Mrs. Craddock, The Narrow Corner, The Magician, The Painted Veil, Liza of Lambeth. After giving the reader a slight inkling of what is to be expected, Maugham delights in making him wait through many chapters to arrive at the climax and conclusion.

[56] W. Somerset Maugham, The Summing Up. Garden City, Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc. 1938, p. 51.

[57] Ibid. p. 172.

[58] Ibid. p. 223.

[59] Ibid. p.48.

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CHAPTER VIII

STYLE

Some few remarks on Maugham's style

Although we can all speak glibly enough of style, when one comes down to a cold analysis of it, it is almost impossible to define. True there have been some definitions made, but these have been more or less epigrammatic and give us little or nothing in specific, concrete terms. I shall not attempt to define the style of Somerset Maugham and shall only say that his most carping critics have admitted that it is wholly satisfactory, and even more than that excellent. He employs narrative prose at its simplest, most direct and most lucid. He has not an elaborate style nor an embellished one; he has not the richness of Pater, the liveliness of Meredith or the arresting qualities of Macaulay.

Three most important qualities in prose

Maugham has aimed at three qualities--lucidity, simplicity and euphony. These he considers the most necessary for natural, easy and harmonious prose. Simplicity he has sought because obviously enough he has little talent for richness. Not for him the pompous

epithet, the long, involved sentence built up heavily of clauses and parentheses, not for him an appeal to the auditory sense of the reader. He has fled the baroque, the ornate, the grandiloquent. In securing this simplicity the writers of the Augustan period have been of invaluable assistance to him. First and foremost the prose of Swift delighted him. It was thoroughly impeccable and served as an excellent model. Dryden too served as a natural supplement to Swift.

> The style of Swift is admirable. I cannot imagine that English can be better written. Here are no flowery periods, fantastic turns of phrase or highflown images. It is a civilized prose, natural, discreet and pointed. There is no attempt to surprise by an extravagant vocabulary. It looks as though Swift made to do with the first word that came to hand, but since he had an acute and logical brain it was always the right one, and he put it in the right place.[60]
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> The prose of Dryden is delicious. It has not the perfection of Swift nor the easy elegance of Addison, but it has a springtime gaiety, a conversational ease, a blithe spontaneousness that are enchanting. Dryden was a very good poet, but it is not the general opinion that he had a lyrical quality; it is strange that it is just this that sings in his softly sparkling prose.[61]

Maugham hostile to any sort of obscurity

In connection with the three attributes for

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[60] W. Somerset Maugham, The Summing Up. Garden City, Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1938, p. 26.

[61] Ibid. p. 27.

which Maugham has always striven, namely simplicity, lucidity and euphony, we find that he has done an admirable thing in declaring any kind of obscurity anathema. He can not see any merit in the obscurity with which so many contemporary writers cloak their writings; he believes that even the most subtle reflections can be expressed clearly if the writer will only go to the trouble of finding the exact word, if only he will not take an almost malicious delight in being purposely abstruse.

Maugham's belief that one should use every-day speech

Maugham believes that a novelist should write in the language of his day:

> I should not hesitate to use the common phrases of the day, knowing that their vogue was ephemeral, or slang, though aware that in ten years it might be incomprehensible, if they gave vividness and actuality. If the style has a classical form it can support the discreet use of a phraseology that has only a local and temporary aptness. I would sooner a writer were vulgar than mincing; for life is vulgar, and it is life that he seeks.[62]

Maugham strives to avoid a hackneyed style

He is always on guard lest his style become too

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[62] Ibid. p. 44.

self-conscious, too integral a part of him, too hackneyed. It is a help he says to have a keener faculty of boredom than one's readers so that one becomes wearied before they.

> One must always be on the watch for mannerisms and when certain cadences come too easily to the pen ask oneself whether they have not become mechanical................A good style should show no sign of effort. What is written should seem a happy accident.[63]

Maugham has himself studiously avoided definite mannerisms that would mark him. He wishes solely to write vividly and energetically with vigour and liveliness.

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[63] *Ibid.* p. 42.

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CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY

Chapter I

In speaking of the narrative technique of Somerset Maugham we have shown that he merits critical judgment because his writings have extended over a considerable period and have generally influenced the reading public. Technique we have analyzed as the quality of the author's work and the means by which he conveys to the reader whatever he wishes.

Chapter II

In Chapter II we have proved that Maugham is a romantic realist, although he himself claims to be solely a realist. We have, however, demonstrated that he has romantic tendencies which link him to some degree to the romantic trend in literature.

Chapter III

In Chapter III we discussed plot in a general way and then by specific emphasis on Maugham's various novels. We have stressed that he is primarily a story teller richly endowed with a multiplicity of ideas. We

have taken the ingredients piecemeal that go to make up Maugham's plots and disclosed them, first in discussing the novels individually and lastly in a general summary. We have shown that his narrative technique is in its strictest sense a simplification of life. The last few pages of the chapter were devoted to a discussion of Maugham's methods of narration.

Chapter IV

Chapter IV presented various striking characters in Maugham's novels. Many of these had been spoken of previously when our attention had been focused upon plot, but in this chapter they were gone into in order that we might see how Maugham handled his characters and made them react to various situations. We have considered Maugham's opinion of character types and learned from what sources his characters originated. We have noted the various methods of character delineation and shown how he has employed these. Lastly we have taken up his chief concern, human behaviour, and have treated this in connection with his interpreting of characters.

Chapter V

Chapter V takes up the setting that Maugham employs in his various novels. We have dealt with the great influence travel has had upon the author himself, and how this has determined much of the material in his novels giving them that renowned cosmopolitan quality. We have catalogued the various locales he has used for his novels.

Chapter VI

Chapter VI takes into consideration the point of view that Maugham makes use of. We have discussed both external and internal points of view and have given examples of these from Maugham's works. We have in this chapter also commented on the question of tone showing that Maugham always employs the impersonal tone.

Chapter VII

Chapter VII studies the question of emphasis in narration. Various ways of securing emphasis have been brought forth and how Maugham applies these ways to his narrative material has been taken up.

Chapter VIII

In Chapter VII we gave a brief resume of the

high points of Maugham's style only studying it in such a way as it would throw any side-lights on Maugham's narrative technique. We showed that his prose style is marked by three attributes, namely lucidity, simplicity, and euphony. We concluded with several of Maugham's remarks about what should be aimed for in clear, direct and vigorous prose.

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